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SUBJECT: WEST AFRICA: UK RESOURCE CRUNCH MEANS PROGRAM CUTS

REF: A. LONDON 848  
[1](#)B. LONDON 1229

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. Budget cuts in the UK's Conflict Prevention Program (CCP) have hurt the UK's programming in West Africa "more than most" regions (reftel A), new Foreign Office West Africa team leader Paul Welsh told Poloff June 9. On Sierra Leone, Welsh and Sierra Leone Desk Officer Simon Day highlighted the UK Government's continued support through the elections; noted the likelihood of violence in the run-up to the elections; inquired about greater USG support for the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT); and indicated the Special Court's funding should come from UN assessed costs, rather than discretionary funding. On Liberia, Welsh and Day said consideration of how to draw down UNMIL should be done in close consultation with the commanders on the ground and the UK was keen to review individual sanctions cases to "tie up any loose ends." On Ghana, Welsh said that President John Atta Mills' May visit to the UK had been "very good," especially as Mills has "Ghana's interests at heart," and indicated that the biggest challenge facing the country would be getting oil wealth right. He also noted that budget cuts meant the UK no longer offers financial assistance to Ghana's military staff college and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center. Welsh also noted the UK Government's desire to coordinate more with the USG on anti-narco-trade and counter-terrorism activities in the region (reftel B). End Summary.

Sierra Leone  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Following his recent visit to Sierra Leone and Ghana, new Foreign Office (FCO) West Africa team leader Paul Welsh told Poloff June 9 that he assessed the greatest threats to political stability in Sierra Leone to be political parties' use of violence and youth unemployment. Welsh said the March violence had been "orchestrated," and it is likely that there will be more violence in the run-up to the elections, though it did serve as a wake-up call for some officials in the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL). He said there remains the strong perception in the minds of most people in Sierra Leone that the UK will "defend Sierra Leone" if anything goes bad and affirmed that the UK would continue its current level of support through the elections, in spite of UK Government budget cuts. He highlighted the November donor and investment conference in London as a good opportunity for the GoSL to shore up sustained support and said President Koroma appears willing to conduct a roadshow in preparation for big assistance pledges.

[1](#)3. (SBU) FCO Sierra Leone Desk Officer Simon Day inquired if the USG would be interested in offering greater support to the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), noting the significant burden the UK had been carrying. He also said the UK Government wants funding for the Special Court to come from UN assessed costs, rather than

discretionary funding, in order to "burden share" the costs of the court's operations.

#### Ghana

14. (SBU) Ghanaian President John Atta Mills' May visit to London was "good," Welsh said, saying Mills has the country's "best interests at heart." Welsh assessed that Ghana's biggest challenge is "getting the oil right," which Mills also seems keen to do. He also noted that budget costs has meant the UK no longer offers financial assistance to Ghana's military staff college and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center.

#### Liberia

15. (SBU) Welsh and Day said consideration of how to draw down UNMIL should be done in close consultation with the commanders on the ground and the UK was keen to review individual sanctions cases to "tie up any loose ends."

#### Regional Issues

16. (SBU) Welsh also noted the UK Government's desire to coordinate more with the USG on anti-narco-trade and counter-terrorism activities in the region (reftel B). He said he understood Africa Director Adam Wood and Minister for Africa Lord Mark Malloch-Brown plan to raise these issues in their upcoming, separate trips to Washington. On the UK's

LONDON 00001373 002 OF 002

diplomatic presence in the region, Welsh said the UK would re-consider opening an embassy in Cote d'Ivoire "if the elections go well." He also noted that the UK was re-considering its presence in Mali and will likely make a decision after the EU's July mission to establish how the EU should engage in Mali.

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LeBaron